CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for conferencing, the method comprising:

generating a first video signal, a first audio signal and a first haptic signal at a first location;

generating a second video signal, a second audio signal and a second haptic signal at a second location;

communicating the first video signal, the first audio signal and the first haptic signal to the second location; and

communicating the second video signal, the second audio signal and the second haptic signal to the first location.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein communicating to the first location is concurrently performed with communicating to the second location.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating an audible sound at the first location, the audible sound corresponding to the second audio signal;

displaying a video at the first location, the video corresponding to the second video signal; and

reproducing a haptic image at the first location, the haptic image corresponding to the second haptic signal.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating an audible sound at the second location, the audible sound corresponding to the first audio signal;

displaying a video at the second location, the video corresponding to the first video signal; and

reproducing a haptic image at the second location, the haptic image corresponding to the first haptic signal.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

integrating the first video signal, the first audio signal and the first haptic signal into a first integrated signal;

integrating the second video signal, the second audio signal and the second haptic signal into a second integrated signal; and

concurrently communicating the first integrated signal to the second location and communicating the second integrated signal to the first location.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:

generating an integrated haptic signal from the first integrated signal and the second integrated signal;

reproducing an integrated haptic image corresponding to the integrated haptic signal at the first location; and

concurrently reproducing the integrated haptic image at the second location.

7. A conferencing system comprising:

a video camera at a first location configured to capture video and communicate the video to a second location;

a display at the second location configured to receive and display the communicated video;

an audio input device at the first location configured to capture audio and communicate the captured audio to the second location;

an audio output device at the second location configured to receive and reproduce the communicated audio;

a first haptic device at the first location configured to generate a haptic signal to communicate the haptic signal to the second location; and

a second haptic device at the second location configured to receive the haptic signal and produce a haptic image corresponding to the communicated haptic signal.

8. The conferencing system of claim 7, wherein the first haptic device is further configured to detect an object, and wherein the communicated haptic signal corresponds to the detected object.

9. The conferencing system of claim 8, wherein the first haptic device is further configured to detect a force exerted by the object, and wherein the communicated haptic signal further corresponds to the detected force.

10. The conferencing system of claim 8, wherein the second haptic device is configured to detect a second object, and wherein the communicated haptic signal corresponds to integration of the detected objects.

11. The conferencing system of claim 10, wherein the first haptic device is further configured to detect a force exerted by the object, wherein the second haptic device is further configured to detect a second force exerted by the second object, and wherein the communicated haptic signal corresponds to integration of the detected forces.

12. The conferencing system of claim 7, further comprising a processor configured to integrate the communicated video, audio and haptic signal into an integrated signal that is communicated to the second location.

13. The conferencing system of claim 7, further comprising:

a second video camera at the second location configured to capture a second video and communicate the second video to the first location;

a second display at the first location configured to receive and display the second video;

a second audio input device at the second location configured to detect a second audio and communicate the detected second audio to the first location; and

a second audio output device at the first location configured to receive and reproduce the communicated second audio.

14. A system providing conferencing signals, comprising:

a first conferencing signal originating at a first location, the first conferencing signal comprising:

an audio portion corresponding to sound detected by an audio detection device at the first location;

a video portion corresponding to a video generated by a first camera at the first location; and

a haptic portion corresponding to a haptic signal generated by a haptic device at the first location;

a second conferencing signal originating at a second location, the second conferencing signal comprising:

a second audio portion corresponding to other sounds detected by a second audio detection device at the second location;

a second video portion corresponding to a second video generated by a second camera at the second location; and

a second haptic portion corresponding to a second haptic signal generated by a second haptic device at the second location; and

a communication system configured to communicate the first conferencing signal to the second location and configured to communicate the second conferencing signal to the first location.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the communication system comprises at least one of an internet system, a telephony system, a radio frequency (RF) wireless system, a microwave communication system, a fiber optics system, an intranet system, a local access network (LAN) system, an Ethernet system, a cable system, a radio frequency system, a cellular system, an infrared system and a satellite system.

16. A conferencing system, comprising:

means for communicating a first conferencing signal to a first location, the first conferencing signal comprising a first video signal, a first audio signal and a first haptic signal each generated at a second location;

means for communicating a second conferencing signal to the second location, the second conferencing signal comprising a second video signal, a second audio signal and a second haptic signal each generated at the first location;

means for displaying the first video signal and the second video signal;

means for reproducing the first audio signal and the second audio signal; and

means for reproducing the first haptic signal and the second haptic signal.

17. The system of claim 16, further comprising:

means for receiving a second communication signal at the second location, the second communication signal comprising a second video signal, a second audio signal and a second haptic signal each generated at the first location;

means for displaying the second video signal as a second video;

means for reproducing the second audio signal as a second audible sound;

means for reproducing the second haptic signal as a second haptic image.

18. The conferencing system of claim 17, further comprising:

means for integrating the first haptic signal and the second haptic signal into an integrated haptic signal;

means for reproducing an integrated haptic image corresponding to the integrated haptic signal at the first location; and

means for concurrently reproducing the integrated haptic image at the second location.

19. A program for video and haptic conferencing stored on a computer-readable medium, the program comprising:

logic configured to communicate a first conferencing signal to a first location, the first conferencing signal comprising a first video signal, a first audio signal and a first haptic signal each generated at a second location;

logic configured to communicate a second conferencing signal to the second location, the second conferencing signal comprising a second video signal, a second audio signal and a second haptic signal each generated at the first location;

logic configured to integrate the first haptic signal and the second haptic signal into an integrated haptic signal; and

logic configured to reproduce an integrated haptic image corresponding to the integrated haptic signal at the first location and the second location.

20. The system of claim 19, further comprising:

logic configured to integrate a force detected by a first haptic device that generates the first haptic signal into the integrated haptic signal; and

logic configured to integrate another force detected by a second haptic device that generates the second haptic signal into the integrated haptic signal.